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SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

OF

SCRIPTURE,

VOL. I.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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THE  
SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL  
OF  
SCRIPTURE:  
BEING  
ESSAYS  
ON  
SELECT PASSAGES  
OF  
SACRED COMPOSITION  
By COURTNEY MELMOTH.

R.  
Pew.

INSTANCES, ALSO, OF MAJESTIC SIM-  
PLICITY AND UNAFFECTED GRANDEUR,  
ARE TO BE MET WITH IN GREAT  
PLENTY THROUGH THE SACRED WRIT-  
INGS.

Smith's Longinus.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

12Fc

LONDON:

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MDCCLXVII.

22

THE  
SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

OF

S. C. R. I. P. T. U. R. E.



BY

W. G. R. I. P. T. U. R. E.

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1804.

T O  
HER GRACE  
THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUGH,  
THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL OF  
SCRIPTURE;  
THE PUBLIC DELIVERY OF WHICH  
WAS HONOURED BY HER PATRONAGE;  
ARE NOW  
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY HER GRACE'S  
MOST OBEDIENT AND  
HUMBLE SERVANT,  
THE AUTHOR.

THE DUTY OF BUCLETH

THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

SEALING AND BEAUTY OF

SCOTTISH

THE PUBLIC TRADING COMPANY

WAS HONORED BY HER PATRONAGE

AND NOW

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HER GRACE

MOST OBEYANT AND

HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HESE miscellaneous remarks were written in the animated moments of feeling, when their author was destined to holy orders, and while the impression, made by each passage, was yet glowing on the imagination, and the heart.

They have now been in his possession, or in that of his literary friends, some years; in the course of which, they have been handed about, with the most flattering attention, from one person to another, equally eminent for the justice of their criticism, and the delicacy of their taste. In the last winter, part of them were delivered, publicly, at Edinburgh, before several of the most distinguished literary characters, not only of Scotland, but of Europe. Amongst these, might be named, a Hume, a Kames, a Robertson, a Ferguson, and a Blair.



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These honours, however, are none of them mentioned in the triumph of ostentation; but, by way of apology to those, who may deem an apology necessary. What hath been so warmly received by so respectable an auditory, may reasonably hope the approbation of the world in general: and what was at first written *professionally*, and to display the most excellent *matter* in the newest *manner*, cannot, surely, at any time, come abroad unseasonably, or be thought *out of character*.

Be it, nevertheless, noted, that, in these sketches, minute points, of doubtful and disputed explication, have been avoided; it, by no means, being the ambition of these little volumes to interfere with church controversy. The genuine effusions of the author's mind in the progress of perusing the noblest com-

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composition in the universe—in-  
dulging himself, now and then, in a  
moral comment upon passages of  
particular beauty ; or, in a tender  
illustration of some of the most  
striking and pathetic narratives,  
are now offered to the reader ; in  
the hope of recommending, and  
still of *more*, endearing to him the  
original.

Nor hath the assistance of for-  
mer annotators been, in any de-  
gree, sought or solicited on this  
occasion ; because, having taken  
in contemplation the great volume  
of Truth, without *any commentary*,  
the author is willing to venture  
such sentiments as were excited,  
by an unaided study of the *trans-  
lated text*.

It will, indeed, be seen, that the  
passages selected are, chiefly, such, as  
have been slightly regarded, by the  
more ELABORATE commentators,  
and

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x INTRODUCTION.

and such, as, appealing instantly to the passions and sensibilities, demanded a more lively and tender elucidation than is usually admitted into ordinary comments.

Upon the whole, the scriptures are, in the present performance, considered variously—as sacred systems, and as exquisite compositions—as the fabrics of faith, and as pieces of fine writing; and it is the author's intention to extend the commentary, at some future opportunity.

In the mean time, if his observations induce any reader to look into the BIBLE with a more cautious, or a more favourable eye, than he hath hitherto done; or, if any elegance is here marked, which had before escaped him, the publication will not be sent abroad in vain, and the author will be most pleasingly rewarded.

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Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.

And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated.

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### Y A 2 2 3

### ESSAY



# ESSAY I.

## CHAOS and CREATION.

### PASSAGE.

AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND  
VOID, AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE  
FACE OF THE DEEP; AND THE SPIRIT  
OF GOD MOVED UPON THE WATERS.

**T**HE true sublime of language  
opens upon us in this pas-  
sage. It is Truth arrayed in the  
decorations of oriental poetry.  
The earth was without form: it  
was the reign of Chaos and old  
Night; matter and motion were  
in the utmost disorder; no dis-

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stinction,



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stinction, no harmony, no regularity; all those materials, which were presently commanded to compose an according system, were void. In this verse, as through a mirrour, methinks I see this now delightful universe, in a state of anarchy: I look, as it were, into the regions of the past, and am struck with a view of things, before the beginning. How wide, how infinite the confusion! a promiscuous miscellany of atoms, and all the treasures of a world tumbled together, without use or beauty. But the thick gloom obstructs my survey, and yet I behold, or *think* I behold, the mighty and immortal

tal SPIRIT, moving upon the waters. The waters hear and obey ; the mighty work of wonders is begun ; let such, therefore, as are able to feel the awful scene exhibited in *this* verse, indulge their admiration by reading the *next*, which displays at once omnipotence and benignity !

AND GOD SAID—LET THERE BE LIGHT,  
AND THERE WAS LIGHT.

There is no reading this without a tremor of veneration: there is no thinking upon it, without astonishment ! It is, at once, so amazing an instance of power and kindness, of tenderness and authority, that,

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one knows not which attribute most to reverence. It is one of the shortest passages in the whole Bible, exhibiting, at the same time, the noblest image, with magnificence and simplicity: and, indeed, the best moderns have copied and imitated, at whatever distance, the graces of the scriptures. Those authors relate actions which are to excite instantaneous admiration, by a single line, and very frequently by a single expression. It was not to be supposed, that the subject before us should escape poetical imitation.—Let us look at certain passages in some of our  
Eng.

English bards, to see with what  
success.—Milton takes the lead :

Let there be light, said God, and forth-  
with light

Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep; and from her na-  
tive east

To journey thro' the airy gloom began :  
Sphear'd in a radiant cloud.

Let us clear the road of criticism,  
as we go along. Is not this,  
at best, beating poetically, about  
it and about it? We confess,  
we feel, the scenery of *the east*,  
the *airy gloom*, the *radiant cloud*,  
&c. but still, the second verse \* is  
a verse of mere epithets; it delays

\* *Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure.*



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the grand truth, which by such protraction comes, at the end of a fourth line, three lines too late. The passage itself is in no degree laboured,

*Let there be light,* and there *was* light.

On the contrary, the *brevity* constitutes, here, great part of the beauty; nor can even the pen of the author of *Paradise Lost*, atone for the fault of circumlocution in such a crisis. The creation of the world depended only upon one word of the Deity; and Moses hath described it in a sentence. Language could not have been more compressed: meaning could  
not



not have been more comprehensive.  
Milton, however, hath been very  
happy and compact in another  
part of his poem :

Confusion heard his voice, and wild  
uproar

Stood rul'd ;

'Till, at his second bidding, darkness fled,  
Light shone, and order, from disorder  
sprung.

But this is not, however, equally  
concise.

Cowley says,

They sung how God *spoke* out the world's  
vast ball,

From *nothing*, and from *no where*, call'd  
forth *all*.

This is too quaint ; it looks like

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a witticism, a kind of conceited punning, upon *all* and *nothing*, *every where* and *no where*.

Pope's famous line,

God said *let Newton be*, and all was *light*,

Is evidently borrowed from the noble passage under consideration, but is a forced compliment carried to the border of impiety; and, when compared with the original, shrinks to nothing. What were the talents, philosophy, or discoveries of Newton; or what his observations or experiments; what, indeed, the consequence of the greatest individual to the actual existence, oeconomy,

and establishment of *light*, of light brought instantaneously forth at the commanding fiat of the Omnipotent? Read the passages together.

God said, *let Newton be*, and all was *light*.

And God said, *let there be light*, and there *was* light.

As there is no bearing the parallel, let us quit it. But, indeed, if Milton's genius could not master it, how vain to look for any thing equivalent in Cowley or Pope. It is altogether *inimitable*, and *incomparable*, being infinitely sublime and sacred in itself, and expressed in words exactly *suitable*.

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suitable. The sentence consists wholly of monosyllables, and those short, smooth, and, as it were, insisting upon a rapid pronounciation. The celerity of the words, assist in, and echo to, the command they convey

Let there be light——

Can any thing flow faster or with more facility from the lip?

And there was light.

If the reader can manage his articulation, the image, the tone, and every thing else will correspond. Here, again, we have fresh reason to complain of our great epic poet \*,

\* Milton.

since



since the five lines he hath employed on this subject contain a great many polysyllables, each demanding a slow, sluggish, reluctant delivery—The sublimest thought may be destroyed by using improper symbols to express it: since every word should, according to a judicious critic §, resemble the motion it signifies, a rough subject should be imitated by harsh sounding words; and words of many syllables, pronounced slow, or smooth, if grief or melancholy is to be excited.

§ The author of the Elements of Criticism.

To



To return. Indistinguishable darkness sat brooding upon the face of the deep previous to the command—Let there be light—and there was light: the word was given, and the order obeyed, in the same instant. But what were the benevolent *consequences* of this command? Why, no less than the creation of the world, and all the elegancies and conveniencies belonging to it;—the division of seasons, the establishment of the planets, and a general accomodation for the service of the favourite creature! In the remaining verses of this chapter, the œconomy, wisdom and bounty

bounty of Providence stand displayed and recorded in all the purity and simplicity of sacred literature. Where is the barren fancy that doth not kindle as it goes? Where the heart that feels not the mercies which resulted from the orders of the original parent? The celestial spirit no sooner began to *move*, than all things were made: the day for delight, and the night for repose; the breath of the morning became embalmed, and the evening breezes bore healthful blessings upon her wings: the waters became obedient to their bounds, and the earth smiled with variegated verdure:

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dure : animals of various natures, some adapted to the wood, and some to the wave ; some exulting in their speed, and others contented with their slowness ; some trusting to the foot, and others mounting upon the wing sported over creation. Then, nor till then, was *man*, the erect, the immortal, created. The world being now fit for the reception of *such an inhabitant*, he was introduced upon the scene as master of the mighty drama. In the similitude of his maker, with the face of a cherub, and the form of a god, he was born for dominion. Authority sat on his brow, his eye denoted his  
power,

power, and the father put into his hand the sceptre of command. The inferior creatures saw, acknowledged and obeyed. Then arose woman ; the companion, the friend, the wife of his greatness : society was founded upon the endearments of love and innocence, the lambs bleated forth their joy, the birds sung amidst the branches, man triumphed in his honours, and the Deity surveyed his undertaking, and saw that it was good.

How admirably these blessings are *described* may be easily seen by every one that reads the whole chapter first, and then Milton's para-



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paraphrase of it: for the simplicity and unaffected dignity, which characterises the one, greatly surpasses, in general, the laborious pomp, and amplified majesty of the other. Let it be, at the same time, considered, that we are now comparing our immortal poet with the only book in the world, perhaps, to which it must yield the palm: and, to do the author justice, I shall not pass over those *happineffes*, whether of genius or skill, which, here and there, seem to improve even upon Moses: a first instance occurs immediately.

His

His brooding wings the *spirit* of God out-  
spread, —————

In another place,

There wanted yet the masterwork, a crea-  
ture,

Endu'd

With sanctity of reason, who might erect  
His stature, and, upright, with front serene,  
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from  
thence,

Magnanimous to correspond with heaven.

After all, I may, possibly, be cen-  
sured by some, for considering the  
sacred writings, in any degree, as  
compositions; since, it is evident,  
that the chief end of these venerable  
volume is, as Mr. Rollin observes,  
rather to purify the heart, than

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captivate the imagination, or gratify lettered curiosity : yet the God who created human nature, knew, intimately, the method by which that nature was most forcibly attracted ; he knew, consequently, what mode of address was best adapted, and would most readily be admitted into the bosom, and work its way into the soul. For this very reason, it is obvious, he directed a language likely to answer such ends ; and this accounts for the remarkable majesty, simplicity, pathos, and energy, and indeed, all those strokes of eloquence which distinguish the Bible : whence, every vice may

I . . . . . be

be restrained, every error corrected, and every virtue encouraged. *Religious eloquence*, and the rhetoric of the scriptures, are, in the highest degree, favourable to the cause of truth. Nor can they, surely, ever suffer, by any critical observations on the splendour, correctness, or purity of the diction. Fully persuaded of this, I proceed with my sketches.

I cannot, however, pass by this part of scripture, without noticing its unornamented simplicity and importance. The first chapter of Genesis may be considered as the exordium of the Bible. The fa-



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cred penman, in a single page, hath related a variety of events, circumstances, and actions, which demand the most consummate attention. To one scanty chapter is confined the work of the creation. Curiosity is captivated, and the soul impressed by every sentence.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Here is the first awful and admirable transaction, and yet compressed within the limits of ten words. The second verse mentions the chaotic state of things, of themselves, incongruous and incompetent, prior to the creation.

The third verse, fills the human soul with as magnificent an image as it is capable of entertaining ; and recites, indeed, so bright a blessing, that we must seek relief from its effulgence in the feebleness of mortal understanding, that cannot bear the fuller displays of ælestial radiance.

The fourth verse, recounts the Omnipotent's approbation at the survey of his own performance ; and another blessing, of equal magnitude—the *division* of light and darkness.

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The sixth, gives name to these, and closes the benevolent business of the first day.

I take it for granted, every man hath both an ear, and a soul for such passages,

Modern writers, sensible, of the beauty of this admirable opening of the sacred books, have viewed it as worthy their imitation, and, without any scruple, adopted it as a pattern : and yet, neither moderns, or ancients have equalled the brevity, the simplicity, or the perspicuity of Moses. It is needless to run into the catalogue of instances ;

stances : the general defect is sufficiently obvious. The greatest epic poets amongst the *ancients*, Homer and Virgil, have been complimented on the conciseness of *their* exordiums ; but, neither the Iliad, or the Æneid, reach he *various* excellencies which are *compressed* without being *crouded*, in the first chapter of Genesis. I submit the comparison to the critics, with all possible confidence of superiority on the side of *scripture*. The passages, however, are too well remembered to make a transcript necessary.



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I therefore conclude the subject, that the learned and judicious reader may turn to the originals.

ESSAY

## ESSAY II.

### ORIGIN of DRESS.

#### PASSAGE.

AND THEY WERE BOTH NAKED, THE  
MAN AND HIS WIFE, AND WERE NOT  
ASHAMED.

**T**HE purity of Paradise is no  
where more sweetly displayed  
than in this verse : for unconsci-  
ous of guilty desires, they were un-  
conscious of shame.

They were both naked, the man and his  
wife.

There is a modesty in the very  
sound of the words ; even though  
they

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they exhibit a nudity. *They were not ashamed*, Lust and Sin, the parents of disguise, were not yet born: a state of nature was then the state of God.—

Man walk'd with God, joint tenant of the  
shade.

How barren are the visionary scenes of Arcadia, compared to that period! Whatever, indeed, has been conceived, or expressed in poetry, comes extremely short of many passages and parts of the sacred writings, merely considering them as literary compositions: but when we add to their excellencies as pieces of writing, the reflection of their being the sacred

cre-

credentials of religion, and the immortal volumes of salvation, how is our zeal and our admiration heightened! The sentence before us, brings to view the lovely times of undebauched idea, when error and affectation had no dominion, and when the fantastic passion for external finery had no sway, even in the breast of woman.

The captivating character of Eve, just at this crisis of sacred history, as,

————— On she came  
Led by her heavenly Maker, and adorn'd  
With all that earth, or heaven could bestow  
To make her amiable

fur-



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surpasses any delineation of female grace and attraction, which hath been since attempted: to say the truth, our beautiful parent might well inspire the genius of poetry, and she might very properly be called the mother of the muses; for the incomparable simplicity which embellishes her, even in the *description* of her person, hath been copied by a thousand bards. Shakespeare seems to have glanced towards her in his Miranda, who reflects the image and elegant innocency of Eve; and, yet, when Eve viewed her *own* figure in the lake, she beheld a more delicate resemblance of herself

self than through the mirror of  
 Miranda. Milton hath here caught  
 the hint, and touched it exquisitely :  
 Two of far nobler shapes, erect and tall,  
 God-like erect! with native honour clad,  
 And *naked* majesty, seem'd lords of all,  
 And worthy seem'd,

He for God only ; she, for God and him.  
 —She, as a veil, down to her slender waist  
 Her unadorn'd, golden tresses wore  
 Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd,  
 So pass'd they *naked* on, nor *shun'd* the sight  
 Of God, or angel, for they thought no ill ;  
 So, hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest  
 pair

That ever since, in Love's embraces met.  
 Beyond dispute, the above verses  
 find their original in the sentiment  
 of Moses \*.—The first interview of

\* And they were both naked, the man and his  
 wife, and were not ashamed.

Miran-

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Miranda, with the first man she ever saw, reaches, not by any means, Eve's first introduction to Adam. We now consider Milton as a poetical commentator on the text of scripture: the beauty and sublimity of that, greatly assisting the sublimity and beauty of his own native genius. Let us then run the parallel of Miranda and Eve, somewhat critically together. There is fine *fancy* in the first, but the exquisitely-painted portrait of *truth* marks the last character. Upon viewing Ferdinand, for the first time, Miranda thus expresses the emotions of her surprise:

I might

I might call him  
A thing divine; for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble.

This is, undoubtedly, sweet and  
simple, but much inferior to the  
sensation and sentiment of,

The fairest of her daughters,

when *she* first beheld her lover and  
her lord in a state of innocence.

That day I oft remember, when from sleep  
I first awak'd, and found myself repos'd  
Under a shade, on flowers, much wonder-  
dering where

And what I was, whence thither brought,  
and how.

Not distant far from thence a murmuring  
sound

Of waters issu'd from a cave, and spread  
Into a liquid plain, then stood unmov'd

Pure



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Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n ; I thither  
went

With unexperienc'd thought, and laid me  
down

On the green bank, to look into the clear  
Smooth lake, that to me seem'd another  
sky.

As I bent down to look, just opposite  
A shape within the watry gleam appear'd  
Bending to look on me ; I started back,  
It started back, but pleas'd I soon return'd,  
Pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering  
looks

Of sympathy and love ; there I had fix'd  
Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain  
desire,

Had not a voice thus warn'd me. What  
thou seest,

What there thou seest fair creature is thy  
self,

With thee it came and goes ; but follow  
me,

And

And I will bring thee where no shadow  
 stays, but I look thee, and I look thee,  
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he M  
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy  
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear  
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be  
 call'd  
 Mother of Human Race: What could I do,  
 But follow straight, invisibly thus led?  
 Till I espy'd thee, fair indeed, and tall,  
 Under a plantain, yet methought less fair,  
 Less winning soft, less amiably mild,  
 Than that smooth watry image; back I  
 return'd,  
 Thou following cry'd'st aloud, Return fair  
 Eve,  
 Whom fly'st thou? whom thou fly'st, of  
 him thou art,  
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I  
 lent  
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart  
 Substantial life, to have thee by my side  
 Vol. I. D Hence-

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Henceforth an individual solace dear ;  
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim:  
My other half: with that thy gentle hand  
Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that time  
see

How beauty is excell'd by manly grace  
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

So spake our general mother, and with  
eyes

Of conjugal attraction unprov'd,

And meek surrender, half embracing lean'd

On our first father, half her swelling breast

Naked met his under the flowing gold

Of her loose tresses hid : he, in delight

Both of her beauty and submissive charms,

Smil'd with superior love, as Jupiter

On Juno smiles, when he impregns the

clouds

That shed May flow'rs ;

The

The gallantries of Miranda and Ferdinand, however beautiful, come not up to the courtship of our first parents in Paradise. For, in the subsequent passages, Ferdinand is too quaint, and Miranda, for so sequestered a character, somewhat too forward :

FER. I am, in my condition,  
A prince, Miranda ; I do think, a king ;  
(I would, not so !) and would no more  
endure

This wooden slavery, than I would suffer  
The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my  
soul speak ;

The very instant that I saw you, did  
My heart fly to your service, there resides  
To make my slave to it, and for your sake,  
Am I this patient log-man.

MIRA. Do you love me ?

D 2

FER.



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FER. O heav'n, O earth, bear witness  
to this found,

And crown what I profess with kind event,  
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert

What best is boded me, to mischief! I,  
Beyond all limit of what else i'th' world,  
Do love, prize, honour you.

MIRA. I am a fool,  
To weep at what I'm glad of.

FER. Wherefore weep you?

MIRA. At mine unworthiness, that  
dare not offer,  
What I desire to give; and much less take,  
What I shall die to want: but this is trifling;  
And all the more it seeks to hide itself,  
The bigger bulk it shews. Hence, bash-  
ful cunning!

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence:  
I am your wife, if you will marry me:  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fel-  
low,

You

You may deny me; but I'll be your servant;  
Whether you will or no.

FER. My mistress, dearest,  
And I thus humble ever.

MIRA. My husband, then?

FER. Ay, with a heart as willing,  
As bondage e'er of freedom; here's my  
hand.

MIRA. And mine, with my heart in't;  
and now, farewell,  
Till half an hour hence.

FER. A thousand, thousand.

The fourteen words of

And they were both naked, the man  
and his wife, and were not *ashamed*,

Imply more, and bring the  
meaning nearer to the heart.

The blush of shame was not in-  
deed, yet known; and the only

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FER. O heav'n, O earth, bear witness  
to this sound,  
And crown what I profess with kind event,  
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert  
What best is boded me, to mischief! I,  
Beyond all limit of what else i'th' world,  
Do love, prize, honour you.

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What I desire to give; and much less take,  
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And all the more it seeks to hide itself,  
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Till half an hour hence.

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And they were both naked, the man  
and his wife, and were not *ashamed*,

Imply more, and bring the  
meaning nearer to the heart.  
The blush of shame was not in-  
deed, yet known; and the only



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roses that painted the human face,  
were the roses of health and beauty. The man and his wife, as yet, understood not that nakedness discovered ought indelicate, or mysterious.

Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame  
Of Nature's works: honour dishonourable!  
Sin-bred! how have ye troubled all mankind

With shews indeed, mere shews, of *seeming*  
pure,  
And banish'd from man's life, his happiest  
life,  
Simplicity, and spotless innocence!

Hence then, it is apparent, that  
the fig-leaf was not introduced until  
imagination became corrupt,  
and

and a train of vicious passions  
 seized upon the heart. If such  
 the *origin of dress*, if such the  
 history of external decoration,  
 how few reasons have we to plume  
 ourselves upon our finery!

CHAPTER II.

AND NOW WE PASS ON TO THE SECOND  
 PART OF THE SUBJECT, AND  
 SHALL SEE.

TO what a span is existence  
 reduced to the companion  
 Thrice three and ten, with nine hun-  
 dred and six, and one! What a dif-  
 ference! For the scheme of ex-  
 tinction is all, **D 4** every soul, per-  
 haps,

and a strain of vicious passions  
kindled upon the heart. If such  
the origin of what is such the  
history of external decoration,  
how few reasons have we to plume  
ourselves upon our fiery! yet in the

That which is a small thing to us  
is a great thing to them. It is a  
great thing to them to have a  
small thing to us. It is a great  
thing to them to have a small  
thing to us.

Which is a great thing to them  
is a small thing to us. It is a  
small thing to us to have a great  
thing to them. It is a small  
thing to us to have a great  
thing to them.

Which is a great thing to them  
is a small thing to us. It is a  
small thing to us to have a great  
thing to them. It is a small  
thing to us to have a great  
thing to them.

Which is a great thing to them  
is a small thing to us. It is a  
small thing to us to have a great  
thing to them. It is a small  
thing to us to have a great  
thing to them.

### ESSAYS. III.

#### LONGEVITY.

##### PASSAGE.

AND ALL THE DAYS OF METHUSELAN  
WERE NINE HUNDRED SIXTY AND NINE  
YEARS.

**T**O what a span is existence  
reduced in the comparison !  
Threescore and ten, with nine hun-  
dred and sixty-nine ! What a dif-  
ference ! Yet the scheme of am-  
bition is vast, as ever ; and, per-  
haps,



haps, it is for the best it should be so. I fear, posterity is more indebted to our pride than any better principle: we build houses, lay out gardens, and pursue the most costly and laborious projects very frequently, when we have measured three fourths of our time, while the foot totters, and the hand shakes. Yet, let us make an honest, and candid confession. Is all this toil and expence to accommodate the new comers into life? Is it to render the passage delightful to our heirs; or, is it to gratify a passion for property; to furnish age with a fresh plaything; or to

shew

show the world how unwilling we are to leave it, by making preparations to enjoy it? Whatever be the motive, the end is well answered. Whatever the impetus which prompts to magnificence, and convenience; which bids us delight in extensive improvements; whether it springs from our pride, or our pleasure, it is just the same; posterity is ultimately the better for it. Thus, life hath pleasing attentions and amusements to the last; the old are busied in designs, which the young shall enjoy: the father sows, the son reaps; and a general and health-

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ful exercise, both of body and mind, preserves us, equally from gloom, vacuity and stagnation.

ESSAY

## ESSAY IV.

### ORIGIN OF SHIPPING.

#### PASSAGE.

AND GOD SAID UNTO NOAH, MAKE THEE AN ARK OF GOPHER-WOOD; ROOMS SHALT THOU MAKE IN THE ARK, AND SHALT PITCH IT WITHIN, AND WITHOUT, WITH PITCH.

THE most ingenious and useful arts are of celestial origin; and from this chapter, it is evident, that the first ship which ever floated on the world of waters, was built according to the  
I plan,



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plan, and under the regulating eye, of a divine artificer. With what amazing contrivance and œconomy were the directions given by the Deity to Noah! How exact the architecture, and what judicious hints were hence furnished to human creatures in regard to maritime affairs! Man has always been characterised by his powers of imitation. From this very ark arose the first ideas of a possibility to pass beyond the limits of land: the scheme once projected, and the secret of its construction once imparted, it was not likely to be forgotten; so far otherwise, that we stand indebted to it, for many valuable

luable blessings—for the advantages of commerce, the pleasure of travel, and the glory of victory. The merchant and the sailor owe to this undertaking all their benefits; and whatever desirable circumstances arise from connections with remote climates, certainly originate from an imitation of that sacred repository, which preserved from the deluge the family of Noah.

inable blessing—for the advancement of commerce, the pleasure of travel, and the glory of victory. The merchant and the sailor owe to this undertaking all their benefits; and whatever desirable circumstances arise from commercial intercourse with remote climates, certainly originate from an imitation of that sacred republic, which preserved from the deluge the family of Noah.

# ESSAY V.

## THE DOVE.

### PASSAGE.

HE SENT FORTH A DOVE FROM HIM, TO  
SEE IF THE WATERS WERE ABATED  
FROM OFF THE FACE OF THE GROUND.

BUT THE DOVE FOUND NO REST FOR THE  
SOLE OF HER FOOT, AND SHE RETURN-  
ED UNTO HIM INTO THE ARK; FOR  
THE WATERS WERE ON THE FACE OF  
THE WHOLE EARTH. THEN HE PUT  
FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOOK HER, AND  
PULLED HER IN UNTO HIM INTO THE  
ARK.

AND HE STAYED YET OTHER SEVEN DAYS,  
AND AGAIN HE SENT FORTH THE DOVE  
OUT OF THE ARK.

AND THE DOVE CAME IN TO HIM IN  
THE EVENING, AND LO, IN HER MOUTH  
WAS AN OLIVE LEAF PLUCKT OFF: SO  
VOL. I. E NOAH



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NOAH KNEW THAT THE WATERS WERE  
ABATED.

AND HE STAYED YET OTHER SEVEN DAYS,  
AND SENT FORTH THE DOVE, WHICH  
RETURNED NOT AGAIN TO HIM ANY  
MORE.

**T**HERE is a peculiar beauty,  
not only in the sentiment and  
language of these verses, but in  
the thing itself.

The transactions and friendly in-  
tercourse of Noah and his dove  
have a tenderness and ceremony  
in them, truly delightful. The  
eye melts at the simplicity, and  
the heart warms at the sentiment.  
Poetry, in her happiest flight,  
could

could imagine nothing more so interesting to the fancy.

Hail, gentlest of birds!—Hail, messenger of security! Through thy means was the dry ground discovered, and the gratitude of man shall not easily forget the fidelity of the dove \*!

He sent forth the dove to see if the waters were abated. What an important errand, for so small an express! Yet the industrious little

\* How often is she invoked by the poets? One instance out of many——

——Pity is due to the *dove*,  
For it ever attendeth the bold,  
And they call it the *sister of love*.

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wing flew over the watry universe,  
 and employed every feather in the  
 service of man : after a vain ex-  
 cursion she returned ; for the wa-  
 ters were still without a shore.  
 Methinks I see the patriarch stand  
 upon the deck, to wait the return  
 of his messenger, and as soon as  
 she rests her fatigued foot upon the  
 ark, he tenderly puts forth his  
 hand and pulls her to him : thus  
 rewarded for her labours, after  
 seven days repose, her assistance  
 being again summoned, she trusts  
 to her pinion ; and lo, in the even-  
 ing, she came. By mention of  
 the evening, it should appear, that  
 she was dispatched in the morning,  
 or,

or, at least, very early in the day. What a task of toil must it then have been! how many billowy leagues must she have travelled ere she found that, of which she was in search! Linger upon the land I can never believe she did, however the verdure and vegetable novelty might charm her. No! it was not until the evening she succeeded in her endeavours, and then, upon the wings of kindness, she hastened to satisfy the impatience of her master. Upon her second return, behold, a leaf was in her mouth! What a sweet way is here of communicating the happy tidings. But, indeed, every syllable



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of this matter hath a grace and a consequence peculiar to it: it was an *olive* leaf which she bore, the leaf of amity, the emblem of peace; as much as to say, Lo, master, the waters are abated, and I have plucked a leaf as a testimony of my truth: the Power who commandeth the waves to dry up and disappear, hath ordained me to bear to thee this olive-branch; haply it is the pledge of promise and conciliation betwixt him and thee, and thou shalt not only set thy foot safely upon land, but there prosper, and enjoy the pardon of thy God.

And

And after seven days more, he sent her forth again, and she returned no more. One is divided here betwixt smiles and tears: it is an exquisite passage. The land and earth had, by this time, resumed their accustomed beauties; the trees displayed a greener glory, the flowers sprung brighter from the wave, and the dove having performed her duty, enjoyed, as nature directed, the beauties of renovated verdure. Yet she returned no more. Noah, though he knew the cause of her delay, had lost his favourite bird. Alas! it was a draw-back upon the felicity of the new-appearing world.

Lie upon the heart that has not a  
 feeling upon such occasions. The  
 softness of the dove, however, is still  
 had among the children of men, in  
 grateful remembrance. She is  
 equally celebrated in prophane  
 and sacred history, and every epi-  
 thet of endearment is allotted to  
 her. She is considered as favour-  
 able to love, and propitious to  
 every tender undertaking; nor can  
 we, at any time, express a courte-  
 ous character without giving to it,  
 among other qualities, the gentle-  
 ness and truth of THE DOVE.

## ESSAY VI.

### THE SEASONS.

#### PASSAGE.

WHILE THE EARTH REMAINETH, SEED-TIME AND HARVEST, AND COLD AND HEAT, AND SUMMER AND WINTER, AND DAY AND NIGHT, SHALL NOT CEASE.

**A**MONG the great blessings and wonders of the creation, may be classed, the regularities of times and seasons. Immediately after the flood, the sacred promise was made to man, that seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer



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mer and winter, day and night should continue to the very end of all things: accordingly, in obedience to that promise, the rotation is constantly presenting us with some useful and agreeable alteration; and all the pleasing novelty of life arises from these natural changes; nor are we less indebted to them for all its solid comforts.

It has been frequently the task of the moralist and poet, to mark, in polished periods, the particular charms and conveniencies of every change; and, indeed, such discriminate observation upon natural variety cannot be undelightful; since the blessing, which every month

month brings along with it, is a fresh instance of the wisdom and bounty of that Providence which regulates the glories of the year. We glow as we contemplate, we adore, whilst we enjoy. In the time of seed-sowing, it is the season of *confidence*; the grain which the husbandman trusts to the bosom of the earth shall, haply, yield its seven-fold rewards: spring presents us with a scene of lively *expectation*; that which was before sown begins now to discover signs of successful vegetation: the labourer observes the change, and anticipates the harvest: he watches the progress of nature, and smiles

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at her influence; while the man of contemplation walks forth with the evening, amidst the fragrance of flowers, and promises of plenty, nor returns to his cottage till darkness, closes the scene upon his eye. Then cometh the harvest, when the large wish is satisfied, and the granaries of nature are loaded with the means of life, even to a luxury of abundance : The powers of language are unequal to the description of this joyous season : it is the carnival of nature : sun and shade, coolness and quietude, mirth and music, love and labour, unite to render every scene of summer, enchanting. And the division of  
light

light and darkness is one of the kindest efforts of omnipotent sagacity. Day and night yield us contrary blessings, and, at the same time, assist each other, by giving fresh lustre to the delights of both. Amidst the glare of day and bustle of life, how shall we sleep ? amidst the gloom of darkness, how shall we labour ?

How wise, how benignant, how like a Deity then, is the proper division ! The hours of light are adapted to activity, and those of darkness to rest. Ere the day is passed, exercise and nature prepare us for the pillow ; and by the time  
that



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that the morning returns, we are again able to meet it with a smile. Thus, every season hath a charm, peculiar to itself, and every moment affords some interesting innovation.

ESSAY

**ESSAY VII.**  
**SUPREMACY of MAN.**

**PASSAGE.**

AND GOD SAID TO NOAH, THE FEAR OF  
YOU, AND THE DREAD OF YOU, SHALL  
BE UPON EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH,  
AND UPON EVERY FOWL OF THE AIR;  
UPON ALL THAT MOVETH UPON THE  
EARTH, AND UPON ALL THE FISHES OF  
THE SEA: INTO YOUR HAND ARE THEY  
DELIVERED.

**WHAT** a privilege hath man!

What superiority what do-  
minion! Yet he who thought pro-  
per to deliver all the creatures,  
(whether winged or footed) which  
creeps.

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creep beneath the grass, or soar into the air, into the hand of man, assuredly designed to secure to them, a friend, in the master, and a protector, in the sovereign. I give them all to thy care, says the Deity; they are thine, for pleasure and for food; but create not, I conjure thee, create not, unnecessary misery: from the unweildly elephant even to the emmet, hast thou authority; yet, use it like a man. To every atom is allowed a certain portion of sensation, and every atom is born to a certain degree of enjoyment: deprive it not of this, but rather courteously *promote* the gratification, than *prevent*

it. I, the almighty Parent, have bestowed the inferior creatures upon thee, my favourite work: for what *reasons* thou art thus distinguished in the scale, is a secret not to be examined: flattering enough it is, that thou *art* distinguished. But though all things are in subjection, nothing was born to slavery. Scorn to be the tyrant, and the very fowls of the air shall peck from thy hand: only *deserve* thy eminence, and *enjoy* it. Such, doubtless, is the meaning of this verse; but the general practice seems as if it were understood literally: for the *fear and dread* of the animal world is now, *indeed*,



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upon every beast of the earth ; and the tyranny of man is too frequently exerted upon all that moveth. The fear and dread, here spoken of, is rather the reverence and obedience which the *bestial* shall pay to the *human* nature, than that terrifying sensation which shall drive the brute from the presence of man. There is something inhospitable in thus exerting an undue severity over the creatures of our convenience : they are fatted, indeed, to fall for our subsistence : they toil, refresh themselves a while, and toil again ; or else they slumber and feed beneath our eye, and, as it were, plead eloquently, each

each in his own language, for *our guardianship*. When we lead them to the last agony, ah ! let it not be in triumph ; nor, as one life is sacrificed for another, as the blood of the animal is shed for the support of the man, let us not, in the mean time, render the little allotment of their existence more painful, by withholding from them that sympathy, to which whatever is delivered to our hands, has a right to claim from our hearts.

[illegible]

## ESSAY VIII.

### STORY of ABRAHAM and LOT.

#### PASSAGE.

AND THERE WAS A STRIFE BETWEEN  
ABRAHAM'S HERDMEN AND LOT'S HERD-  
MEN.

**D**OMESTIC altercations be-  
gan to perplex families in the  
very childhood of time; the blood  
of a brother was shed, even be-  
fore the affinity became known.  
But with how much tenderness  
and good sense doth Abraham  
here prevent the disagreement  
which had well nigh arisen, as is



but too commonly the case, from the quarrel of two servants. The heart is easily affected by circumstances in private life, and the conduct of Abraham is, in many points, so admirable, that the transactions of this single patriarch are of sufficient consequence to furnish a very voluminous, as well as a very captivating commentary. He said unto Lot, I pray thee let there be no strife betwixt me and thee, nor between my herdmen and thine. Why? For the tenderest reason in the world: because, we are brethren. The very image of the patriarch in the attitude of entreaty, the fraternal tear

just starting from his eye, is this moment before me : and thus, methinks, I catch instruction (as he addresseth Lot) from the lip of the venerable man. Away, my dear brother, away with strife ; we were born to be the servants of God, and the companions of each other : the twin breasts of our mother are not so closely united as thou and I : as we sprang from the same parent, so we naturally partake the same affections. We are brethren, sons of the same father : we are friends, for surely kindredship should be the most exalted friendship : let not *us* then disagree, because our *herdmen* have disagreed, since that

were to encourage every idle  
 pique, and senseless animosity.  
 Great, indeed, hath been our suc-  
 cess since our migration into this  
 fair country : we have much sub-  
 stance, and much cattle. But what  
 of that? Shall brothers quarrel, be-  
 cause it has pleased Heaven to prof-  
 per them — Oh ingrateful ! Oh im-  
 pious ! — But if, notwithstanding  
 these persuasives, thy spirit is still  
 troubled, let us *separate* : rather  
 than *contend* with a brother —  
 hard as it is, I could even *part*  
 with him for a time — haply, the  
 occasion of dispute (which *I* have  
 already forgotten) shall soon be  
 no more remembered by *thee*. Is  
 not

not the whole land before thee? Take then my blessing and my embrace, and separate thyself from me: To thee is submitted the advantages of choice: if thou wilt take the left hand, then, that I may not appear to thwart thee unbrotherly, I will take the right: or if thou art more inclined to the country which lieth upon the right, then will I go to the left. Be it as thou wilt, and *whithersoever* thou goest, *happy* mayest thou be.

Lot, listened to his brother, and departed. He cast his eyes on the well-watered plains of Jordan. There seems a degree of avaricious



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ous insensibility in his character ; and when he separated, it appears to have been with the hope of increasing his wealth ; while Abraham, no doubt, often pressed his brother's hand, and often bade him adieu, and even *followed* him to repeat the farewell wishes, ere he could suffer him to depart.

ESSAY

## ESSAY IX.

### MERCY.

#### PASSAGE.

AND ABRAHAM SAID, WILT THOU ALSO DESTROY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED, O LORD?

PERADVENTURE, THERE BE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS WITHIN THE CITY; WILT THOU ALSO DESTROY AND NOT SPARE THE CITY, FOR THE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS THAT ARE THEREIN? &c.

THESE, and the following verses, in a very remarkable manner, demonstrate, on the one hand, the MERCY of the Almighty; and the benevolent disposition of this

this amiable patriarch, on the other. We are first struck with the tender arguments of Abraham, and then with the yielding kindness of the long-suffering Omnipotent. Wilt thou not spare the place, O Father, says the petitioner, for the sake of fifty upright characters? Far be it from charity and from benevolence, like thine, to do after this unequal manner; far be it from thee to blend the fates of the virtuous with those of the wicked: far be it from the universal judge, who weigheth all things in the even balance, to do amiss, or to deal unfairly! The answers of the Deity are uncommonly affectionate, and  
con-

consistent with the goodness of the Godhead. If I find (said he) fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare *all* the place for *their* sakes. But alas! Abraham, who knew the wickedness of Sodom, as well as the mercy of the power whom he addressed, was obliged to go farther. Behold, now, I have taken upon me, poor imperfect creature as I am, a compound of dust and ashes, to speak before the Lord of nature; I tremble in thy presence, and yet I approach thee. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: thou wilt not be *extremely* minute to mark what is wanting; nor can it be in  
thy



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thy benignant nature to destroy all the city for lack only of five!

Interdixit ergo dominus deus israel dicens non destruetur

To this the reply was agreeable to the wishes of the patriarch; for the Deity declared he *would* spare the city for the sake of forty and five. And thus the matter went on, requesting on the one hand, and granting on the other, till the Lord of forgiveness promised to suspend the stroke of destruction for the sake of ten. Perhaps the forbearance of Heaven to the children of men, was never more finely illustrated than in this instance: and when we consider it, we shall the less wonder at the little

the interruptions and stops that are put to the general impiety of the times. It is the grand complaint of moralists, that we live in an age far exceeding every other in point of degeneracy; that the world is much worse than it was in the days of old; and that, consequently, it is matter of astonishment the Creator doth not, for these reasons, destroy what he hath made, and hurry on in wrath, the dissolution of all things. But the history of mankind evinces, that in the earliest periods, the vices and passions as generally prevailed as at present; that murder, envy, drunkenness, and every other er-

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ror, as powerfully tyranized over the human heart, as at this very hour: though, perhaps, the moderns may have made some *innovations* in iniquity, it is but doing the same bad things with more art, with more fashion, or with more refinement.

Infinite, indeed, must be the mercy, which, both at the beginning and now, preserves us from the vengeance of Heaven; and the crimes of *every age* have been of sufficient magnitude to provoke the punishment, and to exercise the utmost kindness of the Deity! What, for instance, must be the sensations

of eternal perfection, at the sight of all that variety of crime perpetrated in a single day, within the precincts of every large city? What must he, who comprehends at one view all the transactions of the world, feel, as he surveys that astonishing mass of mischief, fraud, malignity, blasphemy, and meanness, committed constantly beneath his penetrating eye? Mercy, is certainly his distinguished attribute. Amongst men, we call *him* a forgiving character, who passes over, with impunity, some petty affront, or injury, in social life: the parent is esteemed amiable, who pardons an offending child;

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and





unwilling to see what his justice must have punished. Amidst his greatness, he sits enshrined, continuing to dispense a blessing where a curse is frequently deserved; and in the very moment that man is murmuring at his regulations, with how much kindness does he persist in bestowing his bounty, till even the complainer is silenced and ashamed. Well then, indeed, may we exclaim with a universal voice of sincerity, "Blessed be the name of the Lord, for his MERCY \*  
" endureth for ever."

\* In treating of the subject of *mercy*, and the sublime and beautiful of sentiment, it were a kind of literary heresy to omit two most eloquent and divine passages, the one from the twenty-third

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chapter of St. Matthew, and the other from Shakespear's Merchant of Venice. They are both, beyond measure, pathetic; and, indeed, one is divided whether most to admire the tenderness of our Saviour, or the argument of Portia. The passions are, either way, strongly affected, and as the pathetic is, indisputably, a gentle stream flowing from a sublime source, we may certainly rank what follows amongst the happiest strokes of the sublime and beautiful.

"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest  
"the prophets, and stonest them which are sent  
"unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy  
"children together, even as a hen gathereth her  
"chickens under her wings, and ye would not?"

The quality of *mercy* is not strain'd;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heav'n  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;  
It blesteth him that gives, and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown:  
For *mercy* is above all scepter'd sway;  
It is enthron'd in the heart of kings;  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then shew likest heav'n's  
When *mercy* seasons justice.

ESSAY

## ESSAY X.

### STORY of ABRAHAM and ISAAC.

#### PASSAGE.

AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS THAT GOD DID TEMPT ABRAHAM.

**T**HIS story of Abraham and his son Isaac, is one of the many narratives in sacred writ, which has employed the pens of our ablest divines, being universally allowed, one of the master strokes of the Bible. The commentators have also been remark-



ably diffuse upon it; and yet it still remains an inexhausted subject. Indeed, there is not a sentence in the whole chapter without its peculiar beauty; and, I am tempted to trespass somewhat upon the limits I have allowed myself in these remarks, to enter into its various elegancies, minutely.

“ And it came to pass, that  
 “ God did tempt Abraham, and  
 “ said unto him, Abraham! take  
 “ now thy son, thine *only* son,  
 “ whom thou *lovest*, and get thee  
 “ into the land of Moria; and  
 “ offer him there for a burnt of-  
 “ fering, upon one of the moun-  
 “ tains

"tains which I will tell thee of."

Whoever examines this command, critically, will find it consist of every thing terrible to the heart of a parent; and that, to obey it, required the utmost *fortitude* of obedience. The good man is directed to take his child and murder him for sacrifice; but it was to receive every possible aggravation: he was not the father of *many* children: he was not to sacrifice the random offspring of his handmaid, Hagar; but, he was to take Isaac, the dear child who came, after the years of expectation; the infant of angelic promise—his only legitimate son, and the darling of his

heart. Sarah, no doubt, also doated with much fondness upon the lad : she could not but be proud of this treasure of her age ; and, indeed, we find her in the preceding chapter, indulging her maternal transport, and thus, in the warmest language of self-congratulation, confessing at the same time, her pride and pleasure. Who would have said unto Abraham that *Sarah* should have given such to children ? Who could have thought she would have presented him with a son in his old age ? Yet this child, this very son, was now marked out by Heaven as a victim, and his father was privately,

vately, by the same celestial appointment, to be his executioner : hard task ! But to go on :

“ And Abraham rose up early  
“ in the morning and saddled his  
“ as, and took two of his young  
“ men with him, and Isaac his  
“ son ; and clave the wood for  
“ the burnt-offering, and rose up,  
“ and went unto the place of  
“ which God had told him.”

“ And he took the wood  
“ and laid it upon Isaac his son,  
“ and he took the fire in his  
“ hand, and a knife, and they  
“ went both of them together.”



The soul of the midnight murderer might quake to read these passages of preparation : we feel equally for the ignorance of the youth, and the consciousness of his father. How must the parental bosom of Abraham throb as he saw the wood, which was to burn his child, borne upon his shoulder ? how must the knife tremble in his hand ? But the next verse carries these images of horror still higher ; for the lad, in the innocent simplicity of his heart, said to his father, “ Behold the  
 “ fire and the wood, but where is  
 “ the lamb ? ” What a natural question on his part, but how agonizing

nizing to the father! How little did the child imagine he was himself the lamb, and that he had assisted to erect a pile for his own destruction? But observe with what firmness the patriarch proceeds in despite of all the pleadings of nature. Having built the altar he laid the wood in order, and bound his son and laid him upon the wood. What a ceremony is here! Is there a heart insensible to such description? The very apparatus of the act, gives it additional distress. But, see, the father stretches forth his hand, and brandishes the knife. In that moment the angel of the Lord calling him out of  
Hea-

Heaven, stays his arm! What divine imagery is here! What a picture for the pen, or pencil! I behold the scene transacting before me: the child is fastened to the wood, and directing his astonished and streaming eye to the parent, as if he would say, Oh, my father, what offence have I unwittingly committed, and wherefore, ah wherefore, wilt thou kill me?—The parent himself stands over his babe in unutterable agony, yet resolved to conquer the rebellious feelings of his frame; the tear of nature falls fast upon his cheek—he turns aside his face, unable to see him bleed

bleed—the stroke is coming, the poised arm is descending, and, lo, the angel, the saving angel, interposes for the preservation of the child. What harmonious accents flow from his lip—“ Abraham, “ Abraham, lay not thy hand up— “ on the lad ; neither do thou any “ thing unto him.” The voice of a God only was fit to convey such intelligence. With what ecstasy must it have been received ; and how must Abraham have hastened to unbind his darling ? Here the tender heart might indulge itself in many pathetic and pleasing ideas : it might represent the father and son embracing, rejoicing



joicing in the escape, and bowing in gratitude to the benevolence which occasioned it : and, lastly, as soon as the sacrifice of the Heaven-provided ram was over, it may exhibit the patriarch preparing to depart, and thus addressing his son : Now then, my child, my dear Isaac, now let us seek thy mother ; haply she forbodes some mischief befalling thee ; let us then haste to compose her. Believe me, Isaac, my heart silently bled for the danger which so late impended, and I could have died myself to save thee ; but the will of Heaven must always be obeyed : I now perceive it was a trial, and  
I ex-

I exult in having done my duty,  
without destroying my son: but  
haste, Isaac—thy mother will think  
that we tarry.



ESSAY XI.  
DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

PASSAGE.

THEN ABRAHAM GAVE UP THE GHOST,  
AND DIED IN A GOOD OLD AGE, AN  
OLD MAN AND FULL OF YEARS, AND  
WAS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE.

**T**HERE is a most beautiful  
iteration in these words, which  
give us the sense they are intended  
to exhibit, with astonishing pro-  
priety. The venerable patriarch  
is, as it were, placed before us in  
his coffin, with the smile of satis-

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faction



faction settled upon his features. He died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years. We have here one of the few instances wherein tautology is delightful, especially where the sameness of the sense is relieved by variety in the expression: but even the sense itself is extremely copious and full. He died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years: i. e. as if the writer had said, after having passed an hundred and threescore and fifteen years in a state of virtue and obedience; in the whole course of which, conscience could find nothing to reproach him, but the memory delighted.

lighted to contemplate the purity of the past, then perceiving the gentle approaches of dissolution, he laid himself down on the bed of resignation, and, equally calm and contented, departed from this world to the next, as in the serenity of slumber. None of those frightful appearances, or dolorous sounds were, we may suppose, near his pillow, which, even in death, was smoothed by piety, and the gloomy apartment illumined by the cheerful radiance of reflection. The last hour, in such cases, loses its horror: no greedy heir was watching, and *wishing* the flight of his soul; no interested relations were con-

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puting the time when Fate would afford the opportunity to plunder and to pillage. Haply, Isaac only was present, and the tears which *he* shed were the irresistible drops of nature, flowing from the filial heart: the rest was all composure; for he died in peace, and was gathered to his people; which, by the bye, is an exquisite phrase, signifying, he was buried with his ancestors (at least with her to whom, when living he was united) in the field of Ephron. There is, indeed, much beauty in the chapter wherein the particular circumstances attending the purchase of this field is related, and we cannot

too much admire the considerate sense of Abraham, or his conjugal tenderness, in providing a proper place for the remains of his wife; nor is the exactness, with which the whole matter is told as a point both of business and humanity, less worthy our observation.



too much advise the confederate  
 tent of Abraham, or his conjugal  
 comfort, in providing a pro-  
 per place for the remains of his  
 wife; nor is the exactness with  
 which the whole matter is told  
 as a point both of business and  
 humanity, less worthy our obser-

vation.

It is not necessary to say that

the sacred law is not to be

violated, but that it is to be

observed with the same

exactness as the law of

God, and that the same

sanctions are attached to

the violation of it.

It is not necessary to say that

**ESSAY XII.**  
**STORY OF JACOB AND RACHEL.**

**PASSAGE.**

AND JACOB SERVED SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL, AND THEY SEEMED UNTO HIM BUT A FEW DAYS, FOR THE LOVE HE HAD TO HER.

**T**HE sweetest simplicity that can be conceived in composition, distinguishes, in general, the tender NARRATIVES of the Bible, from the love tales of modern writers; nor does any author approach, in any degree, near

H 4                      them

them in this respect, except some parts in the works of the immortal Shakespear; and one would think, in some places where he treated of the tender attachment of the sexes, that he had an eye to the unaffected beauties of the scripture. The history of Rebekah and Rachel are both related, in a language, and in a manner beyond description, fine and natural: every syllable has its charm, and the whole, is a feast for the fancy and the heart. Let us select a few passages from each story; and first from that of Rebekah.

“And

“ And it came to pass, before  
 “ he had done speaking, that be-  
 “ hold Rebekah came out with  
 “ her pitcher upon her shoulder ;  
 “ and the damsel was very fair to  
 “ look upon, and a virgin ; and  
 “ she went down to the well and  
 “ filled her pitcher, and came up ;  
 “ and the servant of Abraham ran  
 “ to meet her, and said, Let me,  
 “ I pray thee, drink a little water  
 “ of thy pitcher.”

Could any incident be possibly  
 introduced with more simplicity ?  
 or could any be more favourable  
 to begin the conversation ? As if  
 the servant, on seeing her ap-  
 proach,



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proach, had said to himself, Before I enter upon a more important subject, before I touch upon the point in which my master and his son are so tenderly interested, I will begin to try her disposition, by slighter circumstances; and being a traveller, and a stranger, I will examine her hospitality: Let me, I pray thee, fair damsel, refresh myself amidst the fatigue of a long journey, by a cool draught of the water which thou hast just drawn from the well. What can be more courteous than her answer, "Drink, my lord!" There is an elegance in the *brevity* of this reply. An ordinary writer  
would

would have made her stand curtesying and complimenting for many an idle minute, with the pitcher in her hand, and at last made many excuses that she had no cup ready to present it more politely. Such is the abominable parade of literary refinement! But with equal frankness and prettiness Rebekah only said, "Drink, my lord." And then instead of entering into prolix civilities, she *hasted*, i. e. she set down her pitcher as expeditiously as possible, and gave him drink: and when he had done, (but *not till then*) she said: Now will I draw water for thy camels also, till *they* have done drinking.

The

The urbanity of a court could not have exceeded this; nor could any character more sweetly explain itself. Having had sufficient evidence of her kind temper and gentle heart, the servant now ventured to enquire after her family : And whose fair daughter art thou, obliging damsel ? tell me, I pray thee, for thy goodness has made me not a little solicitous about thee : is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge ? Her answer to this does her fresh honour ; for, persisting in her amiable humour, she told him she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, and that she had both  
straw

straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in : and the damsel *ran* (how the spirit of the character is preserved !) to tell those of her mother's house the request of the traveller, speaking, no doubt, as favourably of him as she could. Her intelligence soon brought forth her brother, who had been informed by his sister that he was the servant of the celebrated Abraham : and the brother, whose name was Laban, invited him in with the most friendly cordiality, and pressed him much to eat such delicacies as were most speedily provided. But the servant, willing to take advantage of so fair an opportunity,



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tunity, and improve the moment of benevolence, declared his resolution to refuse food till he had told his errand. This message is delivered with the utmost perspicuity, honesty, and exactness. After he had finished, he requested an immediate answer: And now, said he, I beseech thee, deal kindly and truly with my master. Then the brothers of the damsel answer in a remarkable, but very affectionate manner: The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot answer thee bad or good; i. e. it appears to be a predetermined matter of the Deity: to refuse thee, therefore, might seem

seem presumptuous; and yet, as brothers, having no authority over the affections of the maid, whose happiness is dear to us, how shall we speak absolutely in thy master's favour? Perhaps, however, Abraham could not possibly have dispatched a more trusty messenger; for, having received this ambiguous reply, by which nothing was determined, he tries, in the next place, a stroke of policy worthy to be recorded. As soon as he had bowed himself in grateful acknowledgement to Heaven, for *so much* good fortune, he very judiciously turns his efforts towards obtaining the consent of the virgin:

gin : and he first begins his attack upon her vanity, from which, with all her courtesy, one cannot suppose her to have been totally exempt : he brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and rayment, and gave them to Rebekah. The man discovered no small knowledge of human nature (ever operating, in many cases, alike) in this conduct ; and still more, when, desirous to get all the family on his side, he gave *precious* things to the brother and mother. Surely an amour by proxy, was never better, or more skilfully carried on, from the beginning to the end. When he had made

made the presents, he did not improperly press for a direct reward, nor, indeed, so much as mention the matter farther at that time; but leaving the damsel to meditate upon her ornaments, he ate and drank, and passed the night soci-ally, and suspended the delicate subject. Here was a sagacity displayed, to the despair of our dealers in romance, who preposterously jumble together inconsistencies, and deviate eternally from prudence, and nature. In the morning, however, he desired his answer. Whatever were the sentiments of the fair virgin, the brother and mother relented, and de-

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siring her company a few days longer, they promised she should go. In this request there is a surprising sweetness: how the relation speaks in it? At any rate, she must abide with us a little while, at the least ten days: we cannot part without some endearing preparations; it would break our hearts. I pray thee therefore allow thus much to our kindred feelings; and if thou findest the maid nothing reluctant, why, after that, she shall go back with thee to thy master and his son. But possibly, the servant did not wish to trust the thing so many days undecided; and he might understand

stand enough of human fickleness to apprehend strange changes of mind in the course of that time. However this be, he strongly urged an instant reply. The whole matter was drawing to a crisis. They called the damsel, and put to her the decisive question; and the result was, her consent to the suit: in consequence of which, she set off with the man, attended by a favourite servant, (her nurse) for the house of Abraham. In the mean time Isaac was not indifferent to the event of the transaction; for, he went out in the field at even-tide, to *meditate*, as we are told, but, more proba-

bly, to meet his destined bride; and when he saw the camels were coming, he was, no doubt, much affected with the approaching interview.

There is great delicacy preserved in the character of Rebekah, in the description of this interview. As soon as she saw her future lord, she lighted off her camel; and when the servant informed her it was Isaac, with a modesty truly feminine, and beyond the mere force of custom, she covered herself with a veil. When the servant communicated to Isaac the whole of the circumstances, he

was charmed with her conduct; and the last verse of this interesting history represents the lover tenderly leading her into the tent of his mother; soon after which, he courted her heart, and she became his wife, and was beloved. What a noble poem, or rather, what a poetical fact, is here exhibited in a single leaf? Tenderness, sweetness, and the most delicate assemblage of images are judiciously blended, without the least appearance of affectation, or the smallest want of advantageous language.

Nor is the story of the loves of Jacob and Rachel less enchant-



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ingly related. This young woman, as Jacob was journeying eastward, happened to pass by him with her father's sheep, which it was her allotted employment to tend; and when he knew the damsel to be Rachel, he wept; telling her that he was her father's brother, and the son of Rebekah: Laban, her father, rejoiced at the tidings, and embracing his kinsman, invited him into his house. Jacob continued there as a visitant a whole month, during which time he conceived a very tender regard for Rachel, who is represented to us as a very beautiful woman. "And Laban said to  
" Jacob

“ Jacob, Because thou art my brother,  
“ ther, shouldest thou therefore  
“ serve me for nought ? Tell me,  
“ what shall thy wages be ? ” To  
this, Jacob, willing to shew his tenderness for Rachel, and his wish to deserve her, replied, I will serve thee, my brother, seven years for thy younger daughter, for, I confess, she hath made an impression on my heart. Laban agreed to this ;  
“ And Jacob served seven years  
“ for Rachel ; and they seemed  
“ unto him but seven days, for the  
“ love he had to her.” Thus far the dealing was brotherly on both sides : the remaining passages of the story are coloured by deceit.

At the expiration of the seventh year, Jacob demanded his wife; and Laban, with a shew of much honesty, courtesy and contentment, prepared to celebrate the nuptials of his daughter. Accordingly, the day was passed in all that innocent gaiety, which was very early a custom on such occasions. Laban gathered together his people, even all the men of the place, and made a feast. But the stratagem which was put upon Jacob in the evening, considered literally, was equally base, unbrotherly and barbarous. Instead of the object of his affections, Laban deceiveth him with Leah. What a confusing

fusing circumstance did the beams of the morning discover? for, behold, “in the morning, it was Leah.” Notwithstanding this deception, however, he was still resolved to persist in his passion for the lovely Rachel, and at length obtained her.

It is unnecessary to make farther comment on this text, than just to observe, that the passion of love, which is almost the *foundation of all* poetry, is more pleasingly, and highly touched in several parts of the SCRIPTURES, than in all the pastoral, dramatic, or amorous attempts since the scriptures were written.



It is unnecessary to mention the  
other country on this point, since  
it is obvious that the position of  
the world is almost the same  
in all countries, in every place  
and night, and in every  
part of the world, that is to  
say, in every part of the world,  
in every part of the world, in every  
part of the world, in every part of the world.

## ESSAY XIII.

### RECONCILIATION of JACOB and ESAU.

#### PASSAGE.

AND ESAU RAN TO MEET HIM, AND EM-  
BRACED HIM, AND FELL ON HIS NECK  
AND KISSED HIM; AND THEY WEPT.

**SCENES** of reconciliation go  
as near to the heart as any in  
human nature; and the chapter,  
whence this text is taken, is, per-  
haps, as full of tender circum-  
stances as any extant: It recites  
the

the kind interview between Jacob  
and Esau.

These two brothers were thrown into some disagreement by the artifice of Rebekah, their mother, who, being partial to her son Jacob, advised him, and put him in the way of deceiving his father, and robbing his brother of his birth-right: an error which, though certainly, on her part, proceeding from injudicious fondness, must ever remain as a spot upon her character. And, at the time, it occasioned very serious consequences: for Esau, as was very natural, hated Jacob, after the

the blessing of which he (Esau) was defrauded, and he said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, and then I will slay my brother. To prevent the execution and ill effects of this menace, Rebekah, dreading the harm which might happen to her favourite child, advised him to retire till the fury of Esau might turn away. He did so, and a long time being now past since the quarrel, he was returned into his own country, with his wives and his wealth, and his little ones, whom he loved. The remembrance, however, of the wrong which he had done his brother,



ther, touched him with additional sincerity as he drew near to the land where the offence was committed. There is an honest sensibility about us, which makes the very trees seem silently to upbraid us as we pass by the place where we have done an injury to a neighbour. When he saw Esau advancing, his heart fainted within him: for there is actually in guilt, that, which in the bravest tempers operates for a time, like downright cowardice. But how much was he mistaken, or rather, how little did his fear give him pause to consider the natural and potent

potent affections of the human heart !

The absence of a friend soon buries our resentment, and revives the images of tenderness ; and when the frantic moments are past—when the dear offender is gone far from us, how busy is imagination to consider *ourselves* as the aggressors : how anxious to recall the conversations of kindness, and the sentiments of endearment ! Hence one may reasonable believe, that Jacob was scarce departed, before Esau relented, and sighed for his return : Oh Jacob, my brother, my brother, (perhaps he might say)

say) why wert thou so eager to leave me? the reflecting hour would soon have visited me—nay, it is already come, and I again weep for thy society: the love which was formed in the cradle, should not be interrupted by our tumultuous passions, and I have a heart, Jacob, that throbs to embrace thee: wherefore then, my dear brother, ah wherefore wentest thou away? Indeed, the sentiments of Esau, at their first meeting, justifies this supposition: for, when Esau saw him, he ran to meet him, fell with inexpressible fondness upon his neck, and gave him the fraternal kiss. He then enquired after  
his

his attendants, and paid a proper respect to his wives and his children; after which, both the brothers wept. Here is the subject of a noble scripture-piece: the whole moving treasures of Jacob drawn up in order; the mothers with their children and attendants, with Jacob at their head, on the one hand; and Esau, with four hundred in his train, on the other. They meet—a silent suspense prevails this moment—the next locks the brothers in the embrace of each other. In the mean time, what must be the sensations of the spectators? the female tear could not surely be repressed, the attendants



must have remained in delighted astonishment, and the infants themselves must have held out their little hands in gratulation, and wept for joy. But there is another part of this meeting too interesting to be neglected, and to which, therefore, I shall pay the attention of a comment. I allude to the generous deportment of Esau, upon Jacob's offering, as they may be called, the presents of reparation. What meanest thou, questions he, by all this drove? These, replied Jacob, are to find grace in the sight of my lord. What excessive beauty is there in this humility of expression? The presents.

presents were not given as adequate compensations for former injuries, but they were offered with all possible delicacy of diffidence: they were to find grace, i. e. to have the honour of becoming acceptable in the sight of my lord. There is also an elegance in Jacob's calling him his lord. He, whom we have wronged, has some claim to our veneration; and becomes, indeed, additionally respectable, from having been undeservedly injured. But Esau's refusal of these presents sets his character in a very distinguished and amiable light. I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast, to thyself. Jacob,

however, was still earnest to have them received, and, in a language scarce resistible, thus urged his request: nay, I pray thee, my brother, if now I have found favour in thy sight, if I am still regarded and reckoned as a brother, I pray thee receive my present ; receive it, if it be only as a token of our reconciliation ; this day should be distinguished, since it has restored me to the embraces of Esau : and, believe me, brother, to see thy face again, and to see it in smiles, is a transport for which I have no expression : I rejoice in thy presence, as in the presence of a god. As to possessions, I have as thou, more than

than sufficient to the moderation of my wishes. Deal then courteously with me, and accept the trifling testimonies of my love. There is a moment beyond which denial is unkind, and it is even possible for that, which was this minute disinterestedness, to become rudeness in the next. Had Esau remained any longer inflexible he might have justly been charged with cruelty: but he understood the precise point of delicacy much better, and finding his brother's heart in the request, he obligingly yielded to his entreaties, and took the presents. Immediately after, we find Esau pressing Jacob to



pursue his journey, offering himself to lead the way : " Let us now  
" take our journey, and let us go,  
" and I will go before thee." Jacob's reply hereto is another instance of scriptural simplicity, and was, at the same time, a testimony of the speaker's humanity and domestic virtues : he said, " My  
" lord knoweth that the children  
" are tender, and the flocks and  
" herds with young, are with me ;  
" and if men should over-drive  
" them one day, all the flock will  
" die. Let my lord, I pray thee,  
" go before, and I will pass on  
" softly, as the cattle that goeth  
" before me, and the children are  
" able

“able to endure.” In the last place, Esau was desirous to leave some of his own people with his brother, to render him any assistance that might be wanting on the way: but Jacob answered, “What needeth it? Let me find grace “in the sight of my lord:” i. e. What occasion is there, Esau, for giving thee such trouble? If I am again happy in the society and esteem of my brother—What more can possibly be added unto me? Heaven, in its utmost profusion of bounty, cannot more sincerely bless me. Thus terminated the interview, to the general joy of the parties concerned at that

time, and to the satisfaction of every man since, who reads the history.

The Bible indeed, for the most part, clears up the point as it goes along; and, without seeming to possess the least art, almost every narrative is actually so constructed, as to exhibit what the critics require, and what, indeed, is said to be essential to every composition—a beginning, a middle, and an end. What is still more, the minuter laws of literature are seldom violated, especially, in what may, not improperly, be termed the episodes of scripture; and while  
on

on the one hand, we reverence it, as a complete and perfect system of morals; we are on the other, delighted, with a beautiful variety of ancient record, and of admirable writing.





## ESSAY XIV.

### STORY OF DINAH.

#### PASSAGE.

AND DINAH, THE DAUGHTER OF LEAH, WHICH SHE BARE UNTO JACOB, WENT OUT TO SEE THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LAND.

**H**OW soon after the loss of primæval innocence, the passions, which were let loose upon the world, tyrannized amongst mankind ! We have scarce got beyond the middle of the first book of the Bible, and there is hardly a viola-

tion in human nature which is not upon record. Presently after the creation of man, the first and only woman then in the world, introduced the fault of *disobedience*; to that, succeeded the horrid crime of *murder*, the murder of a brother. Then, as population increased, errors multiplied in proportion; and the almighty Father, seeing that the wickedness of man was great in the world, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, continually; and, moreover, that the whole earth was filled with violence, repented that he made it, and at length destroyed it, and buried

I

ried

ried it in a universal grave of waters; preserving only the family of one man, who was perfect in his generations. The deluge was scarce gone, before Error rapidly strode over the new world, and the first material circumstance left us in proof of it was the building of Babel: "And they said one to another, Let us make brick, and build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven." What an arrogant idea! And thus came upon us the uncontrollable monster, *Ambition*. In the next place we are informed of the battle of the kings, whence came *Rebellion*. In the history of Hagar



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Hagar and Sarah, we perceive the origin of *Jealousy*. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah needs no comment. The wife of Lot is a monument of obstinate *Curiosity*. Jacob's obtaining the inheritance of his brother, is an early evidence of *Deceit*. Esau's menaces, are instances of *Revenge*. Laban's trick upon Jacob with respect to Leah, is one of the first instances of *broken Faith*; and the treatment of Dinah, is a remarkable circumstance of *Lasciviousness* and *Inhospitality*. This is, I think, the first rape upon record; and it is also one of the most pardonable; for the ravisher, who, by the bye, was a nobleman,

nobleman (contrary to the modern  
 maxim of men of intrigue), was  
 desirous to repair the injury he had  
 done, by marriage, and entreated  
 the hand of the damsel after pos-  
 session, with unabated ardour :  
 nay, the young man carried this  
 matter farther still, for he said to  
 her relations, " Ask me never so  
 " much dowry and gift, and I  
 " will give according as ye shall  
 " say unto me ; but give me the  
 " damsel to wife." He even  
 adopted a part of their religion  
 to obtain her ; and as soon as they  
 yielded their consent, he still con-  
 tinued his intentions of doing her  
 all possible justice, and did not  
 defer

defer the nuptials. By this fair dealing Shechem became more honourable than all the house of his father. After this, the bridegroom's father proposed a plan of intercourse, and intermarriage with the tribe of Jacob, and, in general, it was accepted. But some braver spirits amongst the relations of Dinah, scandalized at the indignity which their family had sustained, meditated revenge; and two of her brothers, who possessed a nicer sensibility of honour (viz. Simon and Levi), took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew both the ravisher and his father. When Jacob expostulated

postulated with the young men on this transaction, and even rebuked them for destroying the character he had in the hearts of the people of that country, they answered him with a dignity truly fraternal, and discovered at once a high sense of insult, and a becoming veneration for the great social compact, by which men are united to each other: "Should he deal with our sister, as with an harlot?" A concise question this, but comprehending a full and noble meaning: Shall the son of the very man whom we have dealt well with, in the way of business, violate the law of hospitality, and strike the first

OF Vol. I. L wound



wound in the very vitals of our honour and happiness? even in the reputation of our sister? Can we, O father, be so lost to the duties of a brother, as to see her polluted, and in her, all our family, without punishing the ravisher? Forbid it Courage, forbid it, Virtue! Heavens, shall *our* sister, the sister of the sons of *Jacob*; of Jacob, who hath contended with angelic natures, and *prevailed*—shall they basely bear a stain and an ignomy like this, without redress? No, my father! the spirit, the paternal spirit, nay, the very inspiration of the Deity is in us, and urged us to the slaughter—

know

to

to the *sacrifice*, we should have said ; for lo ! the victim lies bleeding before thee.

Such is the language of true intrepidity : “ Should he deal with “ our sister as with an harlot ? ” Though I would not be thought to recommend bloodshed, yet I can scarce avoid proposing the noble conduct of these young men as a pattern of imitation. He, who violates the chastity of a woman, is by so much the more infamous, and deserving of death, than the man who plants a pistol at the bosom, as a crime which is liable to the justice of the laws, is

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less safe, and less mischievous,  
 than that, which involves in the  
 disgrace of one, the disgrace also of  
 a numerous family, and for the  
 most part, a wide and insulted cir-  
 cle of connections. Yet where,  
 except in the sword of a parent, or  
 a brother, where is a redress for this  
 grievance? Ravishment, indeed,  
 is cognizable, but where is the  
 legal punishment for the more fre-  
 quent and more fatal effects of  
 undermining *seduction*? or ruin  
 in the form of love, and treachery  
 bewitchingly arrayed in the shape  
 of reciprocal tenderness? Where,  
 but in the bolom of bravery, is  
 the scourge for that accumulated  
 injury,

injury, which alienates the kindest relatives; which entices the daughter from the house of her father, till, by degrees, she becomes an inhabitant of a brothel, passes away the days of beauty and youth, amidst disease and wretchedness, and at length dies, untimely, a nuisance to the street? If then the laws of the land have no provision against the increase of this forest of all human violations, what is the natural succedaneum? The arm of Vengeance! And yet, are we not forbidden to abstain from blood, on any provocation? We are, and we *should* be: A moment's reflection convinces us,



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that the inhibition is founded in  
the law of eternal rectitude. It is  
mans' to err, and to mend; be it  
God's, to punish and to pardon.

ESSAY

**E S S A Y . XV.**

**LIFE and DEATH.**

**P A S S A G E.**

AND BELAH DIED, AND JABOB REIGNED  
IN HIS STEAD.

AND JABOB DIED, AND HUSHAM REIGNED  
IN HIS STEAD.

AND HUSHAM DIED, AND HADAD REIGNED  
IN HIS STEAD.

**O**NE may apply to these monarchs an expression somewhere in the famous Spectators; since no farther mention is made of them, than that they were born

on one day, and were buried on another.

“ Belah died, and Jabob reigned in his stead.” What an astonishing contemplation is the rise and fall of the children of men! How are we struck in the history of the world, with empires that once flourished, and nations, whose people are no more! One man drops the sceptre, and another takes it up. The father sinks into his shroud, and his successor enjoys his honours for a little while, and then resigns them to a third, who, dying, leaves them to a fourth, and so on ad infinitum.

*infinitum* \*. Nothing but familiarity could remove the alarming certainty

\* Among the many celebrated passages of the excellent Shakspeare there is one upon this subject, not inferior either to the morality or eloquence of St. Paul, who was certainly the sublimest as well as the most persuasive orator in the world, and who (as I shall endeavour to evince, in the future progress of these sketches) still remains superior to all his successors. The passage alluded to above, is fresh in every man's memory, and cannot, indeed, be too frequently recollected or repeated.

To morrow, and to morrow, and to morrow  
Creeps in this pretty space, from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted flick  
The way to dusky death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

Criticism might, perhaps, enter an objection against the propriety of the word, *fool*, at the end of the



certainty of death from the soul : it still, however, remains a startling matter, and may well give the hint of preparation, when we reflect, that all the tens of thousands which a century and a half ago, were bustling upon the face of the earth—kings, potentates, princes, and beggars, are now buried in its bowels : and the point comes still nearer to our own “business and bosoms,” when we farther consider, that all which *now* has existence in every part of the habitable world, must be soon

fourth line. Our yesterdays, do not only light *fools*, but the children of Wisdom, the way to death.—We are told by the poet, that even “The paths of *glory* lead but to the grave.”

inevi-

inevitably in the same situation. Such is the progress of dissolving nature, and such the constant *decrease* and *increase* of created matter. By these means also, in a shorter space of time than the flight of one hundred and fifty years, the universe (with respect to its inhabitants) wears a new face, and resembles the preceding age, only in such instances, wherein general likeness of race, or similitude of feature is transmitted, from one generation to another.

Osian (whose Poem, whether modern productions or not, certainly breathe, in some places, an almost

almost scriptural sublimity, and are not much unlike the scriptural manner of writing) has, with equal propriety and pathos, imagery and morality, thus descanted on the brevity of life.

“ Desolate is the dwelling of  
 “ Morina : silence in the house  
 “ of her fathers. Raise the song  
 “ of mourning over the strangers.  
 “ One day we must fall ; and they  
 “ have only fallen before us.  
 “ Why dost thou build the hall,  
 “ son of the winged days ! Thou  
 “ lookest from thy towers to-day.  
 “ Soon will the blast of the desert  
 “ come. The mighty will not  
 “ return ;

"return; nor Oscar rise in his  
 "strength; but the valiant must  
 "fall one day, and be no more  
 "known. Where are our fa-  
 "thers or warriors, the chiefs  
 "of the times of old? They are  
 "set like stars that have shone;  
 "we only hear the sound of their  
 "praise: but they were renowned  
 "in their day, and the terror of  
 "their times."

This is fine painting, and with-  
 out any part of that obscurity, or  
 affectation of parages, which now  
 and then sticks to Ossian. The  
 moral passages which close the  
 above description, derive a pecu-  
 liar



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liar merit from their peculiar conciseness. Ossian and the divine writers of the Scripture are eminently happy in their short, complete sentences, in which the sense is always full, without overflowing.

ESSAY

## ESSAY XVI.

### STORY of JOSEPH.

#### PASSAGE.

HE MADE JOSEPH A COAT OF MANY COLOURS.

**H**ERE is also another of those sacred narratives which is not only exquisite in itself, but which has engaged the attention of many admirable pens : yet, surely, while the art of writing, and the powers of the understanding remain, such a story will always furnish *new* illustrations.

illustrations; and every man may be able to discover in it, and display fresh beauties to charm, and fresh elegancies to recommend. To add, however, any thing to this narrative would be unnecessary, and to recite the whole of it from the Bible; inconsistent with the limits of my design: a few general observations, therefore, will be sufficient. The happiest strokes of simplicity distinguish the very beginning of the history before us. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children." But mark the reason for such partiality, "because he was the son of his old age." Though the first-born

born is heir to our fortunes, the last-born, is, generally, the darling of our contemplation and caresses: to the aged parent they are particularly endearing. But what was the first effect of this endearment? Why, such as was suitable to the child's age, and perfectly pleasing to the notions of his youth—his father made him a coat of many colours. Ah, fatal finery! This little decoration created the envy of his brethren—

“ And when his brethren saw that  
 “ their father loved him more  
 “ the rest, they hated him, and  
 “ could not speak peaceably unto  
 “ him.” How gradually the quar-



rel opens ! When they first began to envy the poor lad, they did not, all at once, outrageously assault him ; but the passion was left to grow, naturally ; the fire was permitted to kindle from the first spark into a general flame. This is true nature. They could not speak peaceably unto him ; i. e. they began to cast reflections, mixed sarcasms with their conversation, and silently sneered at him. But how naturally do the *dreams* increase the fraternal discontent ! nothing in the world could have exceeded this circumstance in point of aggravation. It was, indeed, such a stroke, as, at first, offended

fended the parent, fond as he was: what effect then must it have had upon the brothers? That which before was little more than dislike, was now absolute averſion. They ſaid unto him, “ Shalt thou, in-  
 “ deed, reign over us, or ſhalt  
 “ *thou* have dominion over us?  
 “ And they hated him yet *more*  
 “ for his *dreams*.” Thus pre-  
 pared for vengeance, they were  
 ready to ſeize the firſt opportunity  
 which might happen. His being  
 ſent by his father as a meſſenger to  
 his brethren to know how it fared  
 with them and with their flocks  
 was, alas, but too favourable an  
 occaſion for their latent purpoſes,

and the manner in which they express themselves, as they behold him afar off, is, in every respect, consistent with the workings of nature—Behold, said they one to another, “Behold, this *dreamer* cometh.” What a taunt was this, and how quickly did it prepare the society for the sentiments which immediately followed.—“Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and then we shall see what will become of his dreams.” The finesse of Reuben was an human artifice: “Shed no blood, my brothers, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness.” This advice

vice

vice discovered an equal share of good sense and affection. Had Reuben intemperately and flatly opposed the intentions of the party, it is probable he might not only have increased the vengeance they meant to take of Joseph, but have likewise drawn their anger upon himself. Seeming, therefore, to think the lad deserving punishment, and only presuming to propose an alteration of it, as to the mode, was propitious to his amiable design of delivering him to his father. Judah's motion to sell him to the travelling Ishmaelites is, likewise, a fine incident : but the stratagem of killing the kid, and



dipping the many-coloured coat in it's blood, and then shewing it to the poor old father, is a circumstance levelled immediately at the heart, and cannot fail of wounding every reader of the least sensibility. It were no undelightful task to go on with a commentary on the remaining parts of this story, from the residence of the hero in the house of Potipher, to his death and burial in Egypt : but it is a part of scripture so *particularly* handled by men of the most celebrated abilities, that every passage has many times been the subject of learned remark. Upon the whole, however, it appears to be one of the

the most *beautiful* and interesting narratives in the whole lettered world ; nor will it, perhaps, be easy to match it, even as it now stands translated, by any composition, in any language. As a chain of sacred facts, recorded in the divine volume of the christian religion, it affects us with awe and veneration : as a relick of antiquity, it is dear and valuable to all posterity ; and, as a piece of writing, it possesses at one and the same time, and in the highest degree, every elegance of literature : in point of style, it is various and masterly ; the images are pathetic beyond the force of encomium *to*

do *them justice*, and the morality and virtues inculcated, are obvious, important, and domestic. Were it possible to alter, without taking from its beautiful simplicity, what a noble subject is here for an epic poem! To alter the *genuine text*, indeed, advantageously, is not, I conceive, possible: but to make the story the *ground-work* of a poetical fabric, what an exquisite piece might the genius of Milton make of it! I am in doubt, whether such a pen, so suited as it was to sacred subjects, might not render a poem upon the History of Joseph equal, if not, in

in some respects, superior, to the  
now unrivalled Paradise Lost.

And yet it is with reluctance I  
drop the comment on this enter-  
taining subject, till I have a little  
attended the worthy Joseph in his  
prosperity : his faithful dealing as  
a steward : his honesty and in-  
tegrity as a man trusted with very  
extensive treasures, insomuch, that  
his master “knew not ought which  
“he had, save the bread which was  
“before him :” his generous ideas  
of honour and hospitality, in resist-  
ing the charms of his mistress :  
his reception and forgiveness of his  
brethren ; his attachment to the  
youth-



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youthful Benjamin ; and his kind and filial interviews with his father, are all of them scenes so highly finished and captivating, in their kind, that, they create a sort of pious enthusiasm as we read, and the heart can scarcely take leave of them without a sigh.

**ESSAY**

## ESSAY XVII.

### DEATH of JACOB.

#### PASSAGE.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT ONE TOLD JOSEPH: BEHOLD THY FATHER IS SICK; AND HE TOOK WITH HIM HIS TWO SONS, MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM.

AND ONE TOLD JACOB, AND SAID: BEHOLD, THY SON JOSEPH COMETH TO SEE THEE; AND ISRAEL STRENGTHENED HIMSELF, AND SAT UPON HIS BED.

**W**ITH what affectionate zeal Joseph hastened to his father, upon hearing of his sickness! There is beauty and nature

ture in the behaviour of Jacob on this tender occasion. As soon as he heard that his son was coming, he strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. Notwithstanding all the languors of decay, he exerted himself to perform the last paternal offices of love : the very idea of his Joseph, so far strengthened him, that he *sat upon the bed*. Of such potency, to the very last, are the finer sensibilities of the human heart. But this interview was not more affecting, than important. How interesting was the ancient ceremony of blessing ! Indeed, the benediction of an expiring man is *always* desirable ; but when the  
dying

dying is a father, and that father deserves the name, with what an awful idea it affects the soul ! Behold the good old man, when he had given proper directions for his funeral, stretching forth his hallowed hand, to bless. And hear, in what language he begins : “ God, before  
 “ whom my fathers, Abraham and  
 “ Isaac, did walk; the God, which  
 “ fed me all my life long, unto this  
 “ day; the angel, which redeemed  
 “ me from all evil, bless the lads :  
 “ Let *my* name be named on them,  
 “ and the names of my fathers,  
 “ Abraham and Isaac, and let  
 “ them grow into a multitude in  
 “ the midst of the earth.” What a

flow



flow of eloquence and sublimity is here; how glowing the sentiments; how pathetic the occasion! By this time his strength was more exhausted, and he hastily adverted to *another* interesting subject—

“ Behold, I die, Joseph, but I have  
“ given to *thee* one portion, above  
“ thy brethren, which I took out  
“ the hand of the Amorite, with  
“ my sword and with my bow.”

This manner of distinguishing Joseph from the rest of his brethren by a legacy, which was particularly dear to the testator, and which, indeed, was an instance of his early skill in manly exercises, strongly speaks his sense of Joseph's  
generous

generous behaviour in the day of necessity, while the famine was yet fore in the land. Those points being properly adjusted, the good man makes one effort more, and discharges the last duty of a father, for, he calleth his other sons together, to bless them. The verse which summons them, has a solemnity suited to the occasion: "Gather yourselves together, ye  
 " sons of Jacob; and hearken ye  
 " sons of Israel." When they are assembled, with what pomp of words, and inspiration of ideas, doth he address them! The advances of death seem to have been lost, or, rather, Death himself was

enamoured of his eloquence; he stood, at it were, suspended, and could not silence the tongue till every syllable was uttered. The prophet—the parent—I had almost said, the God—is in every sentence of this noble chapter, and he who can read it without catching some part of the enthusiasm, must have as little relish for composition, as for religion. And here, I cannot help wondering, that the Bible is not oftener quoted and read, as an authority, by the lovers, even of polite learning, and literary taste. The names of Pindar, Demosthenes, and our own Mr. Gray, are considered, by many, in point

point of sublimity, as the very children of the sun, while the Bible lies gathering the dust of disuse upon some solitary shelf, like an inestimable jewel in possession of a peasant, who is unconscious of its value. And yet, it were no difficult labour to prove, by parallel passages, that the boldest and noblest flights of these moderns (however elegant they may be when not brought to so severe a test), are very feeble efforts, when compared to that glowing fire of imagination—that irresistible force of language, and that sublimity of arrangement, so remarkable in many parts of the scriptures. As an instance or two,



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let us run the enraptured eye over a few verses of this very chapter.

“ Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength; the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power !” Was there ever a bolder, or more finished climax ! At the fiftieth perusal, it would afford a man of taste, fresh beauty to begin again.

“ Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, as an old lion; who shall rouse him up ?” “ Bind-

“ Binding his sole unto the vine,  
“ and his asses colt unto the choice  
“ vine ; he washed his garments  
“ in wine, and his cloaths in the  
“ blood of grapes. . His eyes shall  
“ be red with wine, and his teeth  
“ white with milk.”

Once more. “ Joseph is a  
“ fruitful bough, even a fruitful  
“ bough by *a well*, whose branches  
“ *run over the wall.*”

“ The archers have sorely  
“ grieved him, and shot at him,  
“ and hated him.

N 2

“ But

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“ But his bow abode in strength,  
“ and the arms of his hands was  
“ made strong by the hands of the  
“ mighty God of Jacob : from  
“ thence is the shepherd, the stone  
“ of Israel.

“ Even by the God of thy fa-  
“ ther, who shall help thee, and  
“ by the Almighty, who shall  
“ bless thee with blessings of  
“ Heaven above, blessings of the  
“ deep that lieth under, blessings  
“ of the breasts, and of the womb.”

“ The blessings of thy father  
“ have prevailed *over* the blessings  
“ of my progenitors, unto the ut-  
“ most

“ most bound of the everlasting  
“ hills ; they shall be on the head  
“ of Joseph, and on the crown of  
“ the head of him that was sepa-  
“ rate from his brethren.”

The 22d verse relating to Joseph is inimitable: the idea of the *fruitful bough* is a fine comparison, but receives prodigious heightning from the circumstance of planting it by *a well*, and the picture becomes quite complete, when, in consequence of these advantages of situation, its branches are said to *run over the wall*. The whole of this image enjoys all the constituent beauties of a happy simile.



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It is exact, familiar, unaffected,  
and concise.

As soon as the venerable Jacob had ended this divine rhapsody of a departing spirit, we are told, that he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost. All-amiable and excellent as he was, he felt, in some degree, the tax of pain, which the errors of Eve intailed upon her posterity—the pang of expiration—and then was gathered to his people.

ESSAY

## ESSAY XVIII.

### GENEROSITY of JOSEPH.

#### PASSAGE.

AND WHEN JOSEPH'S BRETHREN SAW THAT THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD, THEY SAID: JOSEPH WILL PARADVENTURE HATE US, AND WILL CERTAINLY REQUITE US ALL THE EVIL WHICH WE DID UNTO HIM.

**H**OW natural was this apprehension! Guilt seldom considers the benevolence of others, but dwells upon its own conscious unworthiness; and those who are degraded in their *own* estimation,

have slight notions of superior characters. Had these young men reflected upon the gentle and complacent nature of Joseph, they could never have *cherished* a fear of this sort. When the matter was told to this tender-hearted brother, he wept. Sweet benign spirit! Thou couldst not bear the imputation of cruelty—the bare idea of "ought" unamiable touched thee to the quick, and from the lips of brethren—it was a wound that smarted through the soul. What pathetic sentiments are furnished by his answer! "Rise, rise, my brethren, fear not." Am I in the place of God? Shall I,

4                      + VI

man

man of frailty, presumptuously assume the privilege of judgment ! Shall I dare to poise the omnipotent scale, and criticise on the great plan of universal regulation !—Fie upon it ; I turn blushing away from the impious thought ! Place me not then, my dear friends, in so improper a situation : cloathe me no more in the majesty of Heaven ; but think of me as I really am—a man—an *imperfect* man like yourselves, liable to equal infirmities, and only kept from falling by the immediate presence and providence of the God of me, and of my fathers. Nor is it meet, ye invite forgiveness,



ness, since ye have been evidently the instrument of much felicity. *God meant it to good*: i. e. infinite happiness is adduced from that which appeared, at first, to be evil. Forbear then to suspect your brother. So far from touching the minutest hair of your heads with a finger of harm, I will nourish both you and your little ones. Ye may expect, nay, ye may command every instance of affection within my power. Behold our father, full of days and of honour, lies sleeping in the grave: think not—ah think not—Joseph will disturb the sacred ashes, by reviving our childish disagreements.

ments. Soft lie his venerable bones, and peaceable be his ashes in the protection of the God of Israel. See—my brother—see the tear is in my eye as I reflect upon thy fears: but I conjure ye to be comforted—to know me better—Let this embrace—in which my heart gives vigour to my arms—let this cordial embrace be the seal of eternal confidence, and the cement of a brother's fondest tenderness to his brethren.

I do not think we have an image conceived in nature, or expressed in language, more agreeable to the mind, than that, which is conveyed

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to us in the subsequent verse :

“ And Joseph saw Ephraim’s

“ children of the *third* generation ;

“ and the children of Machir,

“ the *son* of *Manasseh*, were

“ brought up *upon Joseph’s knees*.”

We naturally wish happiness, health, and long life, to great and excellent characters. How

pleasing and picturesque, therefore, is the scene here exhibited ?

*He* who had been so admirable a

son—a parent—a friend—and a

brother—at length, retiring from

the bustles of active life, enjoys the

private pleasures of retreat. He

amuses himself with domestic con-

cerns, enters into all the relaxing

and

and delicious cares of the cradle, and finds much to sooth, and much to solace the decline of his days, amidst the prettiness, and the prattle of a nursery. *Such* was his fate, that he saw his childrens children prosper beneath his eye. Often, no doubt, were the little ones, fed by his hand, and fostered in his bosom: and, as for the children of Machir, they were—gracious Heaven, what a melting idea!—they were brought up *upon his knees*.



and delicious state of the castle  
and took much to itself, and much  
to notice the beauty of his dress  
and the purity, and the grace  
of a nursery. There was his late  
that he saw his children's children  
prolong between his eye. Other  
no doubt, were the little ones, and  
of his hand, and forced in his  
house, and as for the children of  
his heart, they were—gracious like  
very, with a meaning look—this  
were known to you all.

## E S S A Y XIX.

### The BIRTH and BRAVERY of M O S E S.

#### P A S S A G E.

AND THERE WENT A MAN OUT OF THE  
HOUSE OF LEVI, AND TOOK TO WIFE A  
DAUGHTER OF LEVI.

AND THE WOMAN CONCEIVED, AND BARE  
A SON.

**T**H E R E are some beautiful  
and remarkable circumstances  
concerning the birth of Moses, and  
they are told (as usual) with all ima-  
ginable accuracy and simplicity.

The

The contrivance of concealing him in an ark of bull-rushes, is inconceivably maternal: nor is there less prettiness, in the description of his being found by Pharaoh's daughter. This young woman came to bathe herself at the river, and her maidens walked along by the river's side, and when she saw the little ark almost floating amongst the flags, she had the curiosity to direct her maid to fetch it. Upon her opening the rushy cradle, she saw the babe; and, behold it wept. Oh Heaven, what an incident this, for the heart of a woman! The tear upon its innocent face assailed the human

human feelings, and subdued them: the virgin had compassion on him: for, she sent him privately to be nursed, defrayed the charge from her own coffer, and adopted him as her own. As his infancy was rendered peculiar by the policy of his mother, and the patronage of the daughter of the very man who had given orders for the destruction of every newborn male; so his youth was distinguished with marks of honour by his own bravery. “ And it  
“ came to pass, in those days,  
“ when Moses was grown, that he  
“ went out unto his brethren, and  
“ looked on their burthens, and  
VOL. I. O “ he



“ he espied an Egyptian smiting  
 “ an Hebrew, one of his brethren : and he looked this way,  
 “ and that way, and when he saw  
 “ that there was no man, he slew  
 “ the Egyptian and hid him in  
 “ the sand.” This record of the  
 lad’s courage, fraternal love, and  
 sense of equity, is very artfully introduced, and endears him to us,  
 before he enters upon those important scenes in which Providence afterwards places him. To give additional lustre to his character, we next find him engaged in a second cause of redress and justice ; for, finding two men engaged in a fight, he took the side of the weak-

er

er party, and boldly reprehended the aggressor. From the reply of this man, however, who alluded to his contest with the Egyptian, he had reason to fear the matter had, by some means, reached the ear of Pharoah : and this brings about another change of his juvenile fortunes. He fled from danger to Midian, and sat himself down by a well. Here, in a little time, his intrepid and honest temper had a fresh opportunity to shew itself, and the graces of his mind again break forth. It happened that the seven daughters of the priest of Midian came to the well to water their father's flocks, and

that the shepherds came and drove them away. What, insult a circle of women in their humane employments ! How could so sweet and courteous a spirit brook such dastardy ! He instantly rose in their defence, and, in defiance of opposition, provided their flocks with water. And this conduct produced another alteration in our hero's circumstances : for, when the father of the damsels understood what the young man had done, he rebuked his daughters that they so little regarded the rights of hospitality and gratitude, as not to press upon the kind stranger an invitation. “ And he  
“ said

“ said unto them, where is he ?  
 “ Why is it that ye have left the  
 “ man ? Call him, that he may  
 “ eat bread.” Moses came and  
 refreshed himself, and so endeared  
 himself in that interview, as to  
 dwell there ; and, in the end, such  
 was the friendship between them,  
 that he became husband to one of  
 the very daughters whom he had  
 assisted at the well.

It is to be noted here, that in  
 this chapter, which contains the  
 story of his younger years, every  
 historic fact is set down, which  
 might recommend Moses to  
 our esteem ; and yet that nothing



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ostentatious, or inconsistent with his time of life, is admitted. And here ceases the narrative of his youthful transactions, the future parts of his story exhibit him in the sublimest station imaginable, enjoying frequent conferences with the God who had respect unto his integrity, and who instituted him the messenger of Providence in the important concerns of Pharoah, and the unfortunate children of Israel.

ESSAY

## ESSAY XX.

### THE MIRACLES.

#### PASSAGE.

AND MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS, THE SISTER OF AARON, TOOK A TIMBREL IN HER HAND; AND ALL THE WOMEN WENT OUT AFTER HER WITH TIMBRELS, AND WITH DANCES.

AND MIRIAM ANSWERED THEM, SING UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY: THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA.

THE whole process of the circumstances attending the miracles exhibited in Egypt are equally amazing, awful, and peculiar;

cular; and a perusal of them cannot fail exciting the sincerest piety and veneration for the power, who brought them to so happy a period.

It is extremely interesting to trace the wonders of the Almighty in these memorable and multiplied exertions of his omnipotence. He begins with milder miracles, and with some slighter instances of his universal authority; remembering the divine attribute of mercy in the midst of justice, tender even in severity, and reluctant to punish.

Thus

Thus, the rod turned into a serpent, which is the first testimony of power, is less alarming than converting the river into blood. And the same kind of sagacious climax is observable in the various visitations of the Divine displeasure by pestilence; the plague of frogs was not so utterly terrible as that of lice, and even that again, yielded in point of horror to the pestilence of flies.

The recitation of three verses will prove this more plainly.

“ And the river shall bring forth

“ frogs abundantly, which shall

“ go up and come into the house,

“ and



“ and into thy *bedchamber*, and  
 “ upon thy bed, and into the  
 “ house of this servants, and upon  
 “ thy people, and into thine  
 “ ovens, and into thy kneading-  
 “ troughs.”

Thus every private comfort was  
 destroyed, and it does not seem  
 easy to encrease the torment, yet  
 we find, this was torment only in  
 the smallest degree.

“ And Aaron stretched out his  
 “ hand with his rod, and smote  
 “ the dust of the earth, and it  
 “ became lice both in man and  
 “ in beast: *All the dust of the land*  
 “ be-

“ became lice throughout all the  
“ land of Egypt.”

The very nature of this creature is more abhorrent to humanity than the other, and was, by so much, the more irksome, nauseous, and intolerable ; yet even this punishment admitted addition.

“ And there came a grievous  
“ swarm of flies into the house of  
“ Pharoah, and into his servants  
“ houses, and into all the land of  
“ Egypt, and the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm  
“ of flies.”

In

In the former instances, we do not find that either the frogs or lice were in a state of putrefaction, but here they bred corrupted matter, and tainted the whole land. But sorer severities even than these were necessary to soften the more than marble heart of this incorrigible Pharoah, and at last, locusts of stupendous size (such as were never seen before, and are never to be seen hereafter) stung him into *some* sense of obedience. It was not even in the power of darkness—such darkness as might *be felt*—what an idea! to subdue him entirely: And God himself was obliged, as it were, to go forth

forth in the dead of night with the sword of general desolation. This effected the great business of reformation, and restored the Israelites to long-lost liberty. And now, having laid aside his terrors, he displayed such a train of *merciful* miracles, as no language but that of the scriptures could give us the faintest idea. With great and perfect propriety, indeed, may the children of Israel be called a Chosen Nation, and a People of God. What did he not exert in their favour? By *day*, he went before them, in the pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by *night*, in a pillar of fire, to give them



them light. When pursued by the Egyptians, he fought on their side. And the cloud came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it was light by night *to these*. Nor was this all.

He caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and divided the waters, so that this favoured people went in the midst of the sea upon dry ground; and the “very waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and “on their left.”

And

And yet all these miracles could not keep this ungrateful race from discontent. They murmur for water, and the fluid which was naturally bitter, is instantly sweetened: They murmur for bread, and a delicacy is directly provided. They murmur a second time for water, and behold the softened rock supplies them with a copious stream immediately. In short, the transactions betwixt God and man in restoring the Israelities from captivity to Canaan, are so many admirable evidences of almighty power on the one hand, and of human obstinacy and weakness on the other, that although they

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have been illustrated by a thousand  
divines, it is surely impossible for  
any writer to pass them by in si-  
lence, even though he should hazard  
the fault of repeating the remarks  
of his predecessors.

**END OF VOL. I.**